

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 06680 01 OF 02 051343Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 FEAE-00 COME-00 AGR-05 SAJ-01

OES-03 ACDA-05 /082 W

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R 051438Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8505

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 06680

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH-SOVIET CONSULTATIONS

REF: PARIS 01924 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: IN MOVE EVIDENTLY TIMED TO PERMIT FRENCH
TO BE AMONG EARLIEST WESTERN VISITORS AFTER 25TH SOVIET

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PAGE 02 PARIS 06680 01 OF 02 051343Z

PARTY CONGRESS, QUAI SECRETARY GENERAL DE COURCEL WILL
VISIT MOSCOW NEXT WEEK TO RESUME SERIES CONSULTATIONS

WITH SOVIET DEPUTY FONMIN KOVALEV. IN ADDITION GLOBAL TOUR D'HORIZON SUBJECTS WILL PROBABLY INCLUDE FRENCH-SOVIET PROGRAM OF VISITS, PERHAPS ECONOMIC RELATIONS, BUT CERTAINLY MUTUAL REASSESSMENT IN LIGHT VARIOUS EVENTS SINCE GISCARD'S MOSCOW VISIT. END SUMMARY.

2. QUAI DIRECTOR SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OMNES CONFIRMED OUR ASSUMPTION THAT FRENCH WOULD TAKE UP NEW POLITICAL WORKING CONTACTS WITH SOVIETS AS SOON AS PARTY CONGRESS WAS COMPLETED, BY INFORMING US THAT QUAI SECGEN DE COURCEL, ASSISTED BY OMNES, WOULD VISIT MOSCOW NEXT WEEK FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH SOVIET DEPUTY FONMIN KOVALEV. OMNES SAID THIS WAS IN FACT ONLY FURTHER INSTALLMENT IN REGULAR SERIES, SUSPENDED IN LAST YEAR OR SO DUE TO KOVALEV'S ABSENCE AS CHIEF SOVIET CSCE DEL IN GENEVA.

2. ONE ASPECT OF TALKS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY INVOLVE FRENCH-SOVIET CALENDAR, WHICH CURRENTLY SUFFERING FROM HIATUS (REFTEL). OMNES SPECULATED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS IN APRIL OR MAY. AS FOR THE QUESTION WHETHER GISCARD WOULD AGREE TO BREAK CYCLE AND AGAIN RETURN TO MOSCOW FOR A "WORKING VISIT," OR WHETHER BREZHNEV WOULD BE ASKED HERE FOR AN "OFFICIAL" VISIT THIS YEAR IS STILL UNRESOLVED IN ELYSEE. OMNES PERSONALLY GUESSED GISCARD WILL OPT FOR INVITING BREZHNEV TO FRANCE AND HOPED, BUT WAS NOT CERTAIN, THAT DECISIONS WOULD BE MADE BEFORE DE COURCEL'S DEPARTURE.

3. AS FOR BROADER CONTEXT IN WHICH TALKS ARE RESUMING OMNES SAW NEW PLUSSES AND MINUSES. ALTHOUGH EVEN QUAI HAS LATELY ADMITTED THAT GISCARD'S MOSCOW VISIT LAST FALL MARKED A LOW-POINT IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS, OMNES WAS EVIDENTLY BUOYED (WITHIN LIMITS OF ENTHUSIASM PERMITTED WELL-TRAINED FRENCH DIPLOMATS) BY SPECIALLY KIND WORDS BREZHNEV HAD RESERVED FOR FRANCE DURING HIS ADDRESS TO THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS. USSR UNDOUBTEDLY WANTED TO
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PAGE 03 PARIS 06680 01 OF 02 051343Z

MODIFY THE IMPRESSIONS CREATED DURING GISCARD'S VISIT LAST FALL. MORE IMPORTANT OMNES SAID, MAY BE FACT THAT SOVIET-FRENCH RELATIONS HAVE WAY OF IMPROVING WHEN SOVIET-US RELATIONS ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES. FRENCH
OF COURSE DO NOT OBJECT TO THIS PHENOMENON AND BELIEVE THAT, ESPECIALLY IN SUCH PERIODS, THEY CAN PLAY USEFUL ROLE. MOREOVER, SUCH RENEWED IMPROVEMENT FRENCH-SOVIET ATMOSPHERICS WOULD IN NO WAY CONFLICT WITH FRANCE'S CURRENTLY MUCH CLOSER POLITICAL AND MILITARY ALIGNMENT WITH THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY. SINCE U.S. WAS

TRANSITING PERIOD OF MAJOR INTERNAL STRESS AND POLITICAL
UNCERTAINTY IT WAS IN FACT NECESSARY FOR OTHERS TO MAKE
THEIR OWN STYLISTIC ADJUSTMENTS, EVEN THOUGH THERE WAS
CLOSER AGREEMENT WITH U.S. ON SUBSTANCE MANY MAJOR
ISSUES THAN BEFORE. IN ANY CASE, OMNES CONCLUDED, IT
REMAINS TO BE SEEN TO WHAT EXTENT BREZHNEV'S ENCOURAGING
REMARKS WILL IN FACT BE TRANSLATED INTO CONCRETE IMPROVE-
MENTS IN FRENCH-SOVIET AFFAIRS.

4. OTHER MAJOR LOOMING ELEMENT TO WHICH OMNES AND
OTHERS AT QUAI HAVE ALLUDED IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS

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PAGE 01 PARIS 06680 02 OF 02 051353Z

41

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 06680

INVOLVE BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS. WE ARE TOLD THAT
FOR PRESENT RELATIONS ARE PROGRESSING WELL BECAUSE OLD
AGREEMENTS ARE IN IMPLEMENTATION PHASE. HOWEVER FRENCH
HAD LITTLE SUCCESS IN RECENT MONTHS IN PERSUADING USSR
TO SIGN MAJOR NEW AGREEMENTS IN OIL EXPLORATION AND IN
OTHER FIELDS, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF SOVIET FOREIGN EXCHANGE
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PAGE 02 PARIS 06680 02 OF 02 051353Z

SHORTAGE RELATED TO THEIR LARGE AGRICULTURAL PURCHASES.
FRENCH TACTIC WILL PROBABLY BE TO GEAR NEW AGREE-
MENTS IN COMING MONTHS TO NEXT SOVIET PLAN, AS THEY HAD
RECENTLY DONE IN POLAND. (SEE IN THIS CONNECTION PARIS
06376.) POINT QUAI MAKES IS THAT UNLESS SOVIETS CAN
FIND MEANS TO FINANCE OR OTHERWISE WORK OUT MAJOR NEW
AGREEMENTS IN COMING MONTHS, FRENCH-SOVIET ECONOMIC
RELATIONS WILL STAGNATE AND THEN DECLINE. WE ASSUME
DE COURCEL WILL TRY TO STIMULATE RESUMPTION
TECHNICAL EXCHANGES THESE AREAS IN COMING MONTHS.

5. OMNES SAID THAT DE COURCEL'S MAIN EFFORT WILL OF
COURSE INVOLVE POLITICAL TOUR D'HORIZON WITH KOVALEV,
ALTHOUGH FRENCH FEEL DISADVANTAGED BY FACT THAT KOVALEV
IS PRIMARILY EUROPEAN AND CSCE EXPERT WHEREAS
DE COURCEL'S COMPETENCE IS GLOBAL. OMNES SAID MAIN
ISSUE WILL BE "THE OBVIOUS ONES ON EVERYBODY'S MIND."
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